

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 IO-13 /090 W

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P R 211551Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9680

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 6382

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, UR

SUBJECT: VINOGRADOV VISIT TO SYRIA

1. SUMMARY: VINOGRADOV APPARENTLY BROKE NO NEW GROUND IN
DISCUSSING SOVIET VIEWS WITH SYRIANS ABOUT URGENT NEED
FOR CONVENING MEPC. LEBANESE CRISIS WAS DISTINCTLY
SIDE ISSUE. END SUMMARY.

2. SOVIET MEPC REPRESENTATIVE VINOGRADOV VISITED DAMASCUS
SEPT 17-20. HE MET SEPT 18 AND AGAIN ON SEPT 20 WITH
FONMIN KHADDAM AND HAD SEPARATE MEETINGS WITH KHADDAM'S
DEPUTY, RAFI'I. ONE SOURCE STATES HE ALSO MET WITH ASAD
BUT, IF SO, THIS HAS NOT BEEN PUBLICIZED LOCALLY.

3. VISIT RECEIVED MODERATE PRESS COVERAGE WHICH INITIALLY
DESCRIBED PURPOSE OF VISIT AS DISCUSSION OF THE "MIDDLE
EAST CRISIS" AND GENEVA MEPC. DEP FONMIN RAFI'I TOLD PRESS
THAT FIRST KHADDAM MEETING INCLUDED EXCHANGE OF VIEWS
ON GENERAL AREA SITUATION AND PARTICULARLY ABOUT LEBANON.
SYRIAN NEWS AGENCY SEPT 20 REFERRED TO PRAVDA CALL OF
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PREVIOUS DAY APPEALING FOR CONVENING OF GENEVA SOONEST

TO DISCUSS GENERAL PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AREA. PRAVDA
REPORTEDLY NOTED THAT CONTINUATION OF THE LEBANESE CRISIS
UNDERLINED PRESSING NEED FOR CONFERENCE.

4. DAMASCUS RADIO SEPT 20 STATED THAT IN THEIR
SECOND MEETING KHADDAM DISCUSSED WITH VINOGRADOV SOVIET
EFFORTS TO CONVENE MEPC. SYRIAN FONMIN REPORTEDLY
REITERATED THAT SYRIAN POSITION REMAINED BASED ON TOTAL
ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, RECOGNITION OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS
AND PLO PARTICIPATION AS A FULL MEMBER IN CONFERENCE.

5. AMBASSADOR ASKED DEPFONMIN RAFI'I EVENING SEPT 20
ABOUT TALKS AND HOW VINOGRADOV HAD RELATED LEBANESE
CRISIS TO GENEVA CONFERENCE. RAFI'I REPLIED THAT MOST OF
DISCUSSIONS HAD IN FACT FOCUSED ON SOVIET IDEAS ABOUT
GENEVA. VINOGRADOV'S REFERENCES TO LEBANON HAD BEEN IN
PASSING; SOVIET MERELY NOTED THAT GENEVA COULD OFFER SETTING FOR
RESOLUTION OF LEBANESE CRISIS AS PART OF OVERALL AREA
SOLUTION. RAFI'I STATED THAT VINOGRADOV HAD DWELT
AT LENGTH ON SOVIET PROPOSAL OF A TWO-STAGE CONFERENCE
WITH PLO PARTICIPATING FULLY IN BOTH THE FIRST PREPARATORY
SESSION AND THE LATER FULL CONFERENCE.

6. DIRECTOR OF WEST EUROPEAN AFFAIRS JOUAYJATI COMMENTED
TO DCM THAT SYRIANS BELIEVED SOVIETS FOUND IT EASIER
TO TALK OF GENEVA CONFERENCE WITH SYRIANS THAN OTHER
SUBJECTS AT THIS JUNCTURE WHEN SYRIAN/SOVIET RELATIONS
ARE UNDER STRAIN OWING TO SOVIET CRITICISM OF SYRIAN
ROLE IN LEBANON.

7. ACCORDING TO RAFI'I, VINOGRADOV RETURNED TO MOSCOW
EVENING SEPT 20 AND DID NOT VISIT ANY OTHER AREA CAPITALS
ON HIS PRESENT TOUR.

8. COMMENT: WE HAVE HEARD NO SPECIAL REASONS FOR THE TIMING
OF VINOGRADOV'S VISIT. COMING AS IT DID AT POINT WHEN
LEBANESE CRISIS IS STILL AT HIGH BOIL AND ON EVE OF UNGA MAY
BE SUFFICIENT EXPLANATION.

MURPHY

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